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Message Text

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41
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02

ACDA-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 IO-10 OIC-02 SS-15 NSC-05 /074 W
---------- 090801
R 101308Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2745
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY MADRID
DIA WASHDC
USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS BEL
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2627

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NATO
SUBJ: WHY PRIME MINISTER TO NATO SUMMIT?

REF: LISBON 2542

1. PRIOR TO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT, PRESS HAD REPORTED AS
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VIRTUAL CERTAINTY THAT PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES WOULD ATTEND NATO

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SUMMIT. COSTA GOMES, AS WELL KNOWN SUPPORTER OF NATO WAS THE OBVIOUS CANDIDATE. PRESS AND LOCAL POLITICAL OBSERVERS REACTED WITH SURPRISE AND PUZZLEMENT WHEN PRIME MINISTER WAS NAMED (REFTEL) TO HEAD THE PORTUGUESE DELEGATION. EMBASSY SOURCES FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE HAVE OFFERED THE FOLLOWING HYPOTHESES AS TO WHY PM IS GOING INSTEAD OF THE PRESIDENT:
(A) FONOFF BELIEVES THAT PRESIDENT FORD WILL BE ONLY CHIEF OF STATE AT THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE, THEREFORE, PORTUGAL WOULD BE OUT OF STEP WITH REST OF EUROPE IN SENDING PRESIDENT.
(B) IN VIEW OF (A) AND WITH PRESIDENT FORD VISITING SPAIN AFTER THE SUMMIT, IT WOULD BE DOUBLY EMBARASSING TO HAVE PRESIDENT GOMES AT THE SUMMIT.
(C) PM DECISION TO GO IS RESULT OF POLITICAL POWER PLAY IN WHICH PRESIDENT LOST.
(D) PRESIDENT SUGGESTED SENDING PM BECAUSE IT WOULD LINK GONCALVES WITH NATO TO THE DETRIMENT OF HIS SUPPORT FROM THE ANTI-NATO LEFT AND WOULD HAVE DESIREABLE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTS IN EXPOSING THE COMPARATIVELY UNTRAVELED PRIME MINISTER TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE PORTUGAL. IT WOULD ALSO HAVE HELPFUL RESULT OF REDUCING PRESIDENT'S OVER-EXPOSURE AS SUPPORTER OF NATO AND THE WEST.

COMMENT: EMBASSY INCLINED TO ACCEPT HYPOTHESIS (A) AND (B) AS THE REASONS FOR THE GOP DECISION WITH THE PRESIDENT QUITE PROBABLY HAVING IN MIND (D) TOO.
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